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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Soviet Zone)

SUBJECT Factors Affecting Scientific Capabilities in
Theoretical and Applied Mechanics

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1. Mainly because of the exodus of first-rate scientific talent up to about 1948, the scientific capabilities of Germany (Soviet Zone) in theoretical and applied mechanics have deteriorated markedly. Crossing the boundary was still fairly easy in 1945, 1946, and 1947 and many of the best German scientists in the universities in Soviet-occupied territory made the break. Most of these have succeeded in re-establishing themselves. A few, for one reason or another, have not made out too well, but in any case their departures resulted in a drain on the scientific potential of Germany (Soviet Zone) in this field which will require another generation to restore.

2.

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3. In Germany, as in all of Western Europe, the source of scientific achievement has always been the dedicated individuals working without pressure or restraints in university laboratories. In Germany (Soviet Zone) this source is at present meager. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the picture is mediocre. Second-raters predominate and the production of research is unimpressive. The case of Hans Heyde, who is either a full professor or an associate professor of engineering mechanics at the University of Berlin, is typical. Up until the end of World War II Heyde taught in a technical high school and had written a book on mechanics [REDACTED] which is without scientific merit. On the strength of this book Heyde was offered, and accepted, his present position. [REDACTED] Germany (Soviet Zone) is doing everything it can to maintain educational and research standards, and perhaps even to raise them, but it is obviously impossible to do so with such personnel as are now presiding over the university classrooms and laboratories. It is difficult for most students to get beyond the level of their teachers and all students of promise suffer without the help and inspiration of first-rate faculty guidance.

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4. [REDACTED]

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5. While the potential of the German (Soviet Zone) universities for creative thinking in engineering mechanics seems [redacted] to be very poor, this is probably not the whole story. The German Academy of Sciences in Berlin, particularly the Division of Applied Mathematics of its Mathematical Research Institute, is evidently being used by the Soviet Zone authorities to assemble scientific talent which, for one reason or another, cannot be utilized in teaching or in industry, and which might be tempted to defect to the Federal Republic. Further [redacted] classified research and development is underway in the Division of Applied Mathematics. [redacted]

6.

[redacted] 1947 [redacted] political interference with intellectual activity in the Soviet Zone. [redacted] there was a general tendency to apply pressures but [redacted] this was less pronounced, as might be expected, in science and engineering than in social studies and the humanities. [redacted]

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7. The question arises as to the long-term effect on morale and capability of such direct or indirect political pressures as are being applied against the scientists in Germany (Soviet Zone). As far as these Germans are concerned, and perhaps as far as the generality of scientists everywhere is concerned, the effect of these restraints ought not to be over-estimated. The scientists will be motivated by the love of their work and the special rewards of satisfaction and prestige it yields. Those who are opposed to the government under which they live but who have no interest in risking their lives by overt opposition, will make the situation bearable by losing themselves more and more completely in their work. Isolation from their colleagues across political boundaries will handicap them, but all scientists everywhere are handicapped by such lack of communication. Finally, while the Soviet Zone universities have been stripped of most of their first-rate talent, a great deal can be achieved by capable, conscientious investigators in sufficient numbers.

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